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ABSTRACT

The Shared Responsibility Model (SRM), a language process model that has been used effectively in classrooms that serve limited and proficient English speakers interacting within the same environment, can be utilized with Navajo children. SRM's philosophy recognizes that students learn and retain vocabulary most effectively when they: (1) learn vocabulary actively, as that language meets their needs; (2) share that language in real situations; (3) work with words that are important to them; (4) practice words in low-risk situations; and (5) approach language literacy holistically. Since students must have the opportunity to use the vocabulary purposefully, daily classes must be shifted from teacher-dominated environments to student-oriented settings; SRM utilizes students' strengths as the center of instruction. In writing, SRM encourages students to maintain ownership of the piece, provides purposeful writing experiences which have real audiences, and emphasizes quality and not just quantity. The majority of in-class time is used for drafting, revising, and editing. To foster an interest in reading and to develop comprehension, SRM emphasizes the relevance of materials by utilizing traditional English curriculum objectives and non-traditional classroom materials. For example, texts for junior high Navajo students might include stories from the Long Walk period, coyote stories, or student-produced materials. (ERB)

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Ganado, Arizona

[1984]

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A LONG TIME AGO THERE WAS A MARVELOUS CANYON: ENERGIZING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Successful people share one thing in common, and often only one - a high vocabulary, stated Lawliss, 1981. Although a person with a rich vocabulary may not always succeed in the world of work, he continued, a person with a low vocabulary usually never succeeds.

From the time of birth, a child interacts within a rich language environment. In fact, according to Bettelheim, 1981, by the time children enter school most already know and use at least 4,000 words. With the exception of the first few words learned in infancy, no one needs to make a deliberate effort to teach children these words. Children make words their own because they find them pleasing and useful.

While the comments of Lawliss and Bettelheim are enlightening, they also underline the challenge which faces the teacher of the non-native speaking Indian child, who enters school with a vocabulary of 4,000 Navajo, rather than English, words. Traditional English language instructional materials and programming are not always appropriate for this student.

Many reservation school systems have realized the deficiencies and have taken steps to redress their curricula in order to meet the needs of the Indian child. Unfortunately, in many cases accepted language programming has been adjusted to the rate at which the Native American child learns English; few curricula have been changed to

accommodate the unique, diverse backgrounds of the participants. Further, the effectiveness these literacy programs is often limited by assumptions. Rather than expecting too much, learner outcomes and instructional expectations are not clearly identified and therefore, educators often settle for too little.

Education for all students, regardless of their language proficiency, can be exciting and meaningful. Students are the teacher's greatest instructional resource, and they must be allowed and expected to participate in their education. In other words, to maximize learning potential, the student needs involvement.

This article will describe the Shared Responsibility Model (SRM). A language process model, SRM has been used effectively in classrooms which serve limited and proficient English speakers interacting within the same environment. What makes the Shared Responsibility Model different is that in this paradigm, growth in student literacy is viewed as the obligation of both the teacher and the student.

Melton

In October of his eighth grade year, Melton, a Navajo student, wrote a story. The introduction included the following one line:

> A long time ago, the Navajo always got into wars with some other Indian tribes far over to the east.

As he continued, his story reflected class vocabulary, but the structure lacked sophistication.

> One night the Navajos had a meeting in a big hogan and their leader was there. He conveyed to all

> the people in the hogan that they needed a spy to guard their people, so that they could reign in the country again with no problems at all...

The piece written in October continued for several paragraphs. However, by March of that same year, Melton had generated the following introduction:

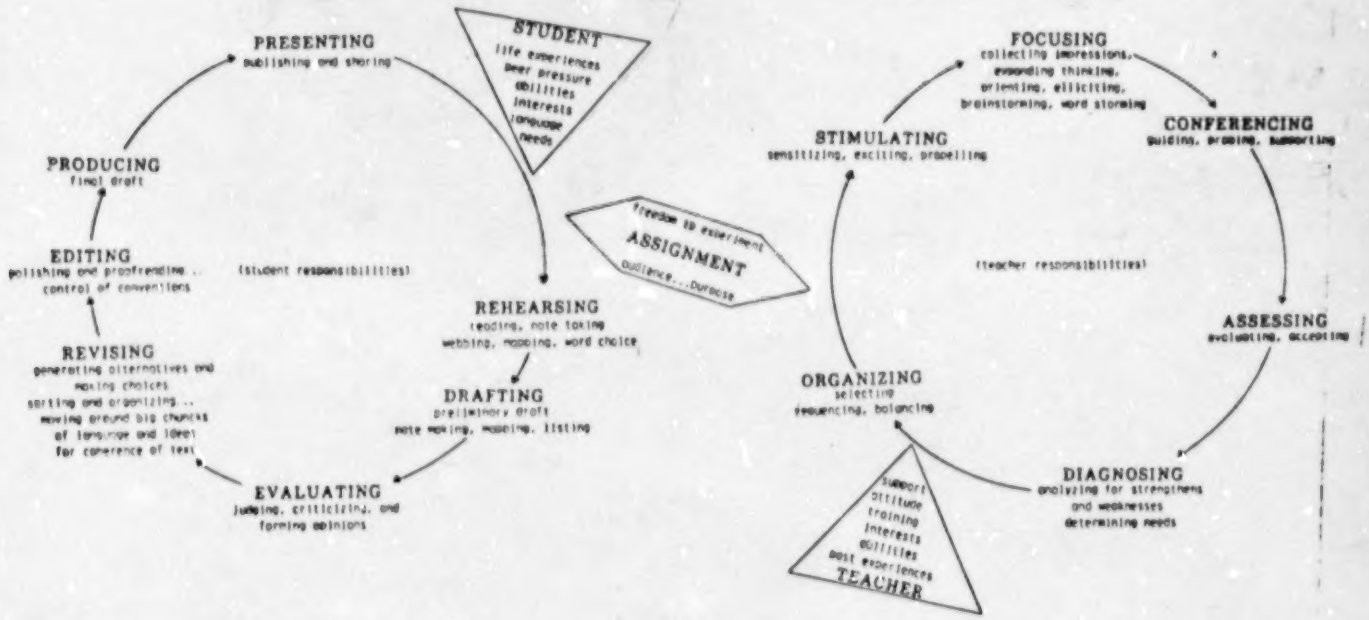
> A long time ago, there was a marvelous canyon. The canyon was magnificent with tall red rocks standing in the sun like skyscrapers and the canyon was deluged by them. The tall red rocks made fancy figures in the cool dark shadows beneath them, and big bushy turquoise colored sagebrush waved all over the arid plain. The sun illuminated the bright gigantic rocks, making them look very distinct even from a distant mile. Looking farther, there were the rolling hills, thick with all kinds of familiar plants for animals that lived on them. The farther one looked the more colorful the environment became. All over the Navajo region there was nothing more beautiful than this tranquil place.
> The time of the year was a cool warm summer morning, with a clear light blue turquoise sky hovering over, and the sun had just emerged from behind the tall red rocks...

The Shared Responsibility Model

The methods and strategies that enabled Melton to maximize his potential as a writer were built around a langauge process model called the Shared Responsibility Model (Boloz and Loughrin, 1983). Because effective teachers demonstrate tenacity in pursuit of their instructional goals, the Shared Responsibility Model (SRM) requires the teacher to set and verify realistic objectives for student performance and also to be cognizant that language learning is a shared responsibility.

(insert Shared Responsibility Model here)

THE SHARED RESPONSIBILIY MODEL



(For expanded treatment of the model see [ED 240 580])

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The Shared Responsibility Model is facilitated through the following philosophy:

> There is a need for each child to be heard. A child will only learn to use a language if he has the opportunity to use the language. A child will learn to read a language if he finds meaning in that language. A child will learn to write a language if he finds that others find meaning in his work. (Boloz, 1980)

This philosophy recognizes that students learn and retain vocabulary most effectively when they: (1) learn vocabulary actively as that language meets their needs; (2) share that language in real situations; (3) work with words that are important to them; (4) practice words in low-risk situations; and (5) approach language literacy holistically. Because students must have the opportunity to use the vocabulary purposefully, daily classes must be shifted from teacher-dominated environments to student-oriented settings; SRM utilizes student strengths as the center of instruction.

Since students learn from their successes, various opportunities must be provided for the students to experience success. SRM encourages mastery of subject content. Ample opportunities are given for the students to improve weaknesses, and evaluations are based on the movement towards criteria. Further, the emphasis in SRM is placed on the students' establishing short and long term goals for themselves, on their taking responsibility for how they meet criteria, and, thereby, on developing in the students the concept that grades are earned by them, rather than given by the teacher.

To facilitate the model, lectures are purposely kept to a

minimum. Lectures are utilized only to introduce new concepts or to clarify assignments. Traditional language skills, such as grammar, punctuation, etc., are taught when students exhibit a need for them. Whenever new skills are presented, application of the skill in context is emphasized. It is the purpose of this model to create meaningful opportunities to apply the skills and concepts which they have been taught.

WRITING

In the Shared Responsibility Model students are encouraged to maintain ownership of the piece. They are provided with purposeful writing experiences which have real audiences. Also, the emphasis is on quality and not just quantity.

Writing is not encouraged for writing's sake but to accomplish specific language goals. This decreases boredom and allows the student to move more rapidly, with assignments more efficiently and effectively completed. Whenever possible, relevant native terms and situations are integrated into the seatwork assignments, and this generates student interest.

Instead of ponderous essays on "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," students write about their heritage, feelings and family. Since a purpose of SRM is to facilitate language use, students are encouraged to glean ideas from parents, relatives, and community elders.

The majority of in-class time is used for drafting, revising, and editing. This occurs through both student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions. Since peer interaction is critical to language learning and improvement, students are encouraged to share

ideas, to react to each other's work, and to glean ideas from one another. Finally, writing is reinforced through conferencing, and completed tasks are typed, posted, and published.

READING

According to Obah, 1983, one clearly articulated claim in the literature on comprehension is that prior knowledge about a topic facilitates comprehension. Adam and Bruce, 1980, state that without prior knowledge, a complex object such as a text is not just difficult to interpret; strictly speaking, it is meaningless. To foster an interest in reading and to develop comprehension, SRM emphasizes the relevance of materials.

Utilizing traditional English curriculum objectives, SRM develops around non-traditional classroom materials. Examples for junior high Navajo students might include Navajo Community College's Stories from the Long Walk Period , or Rough Rock's Coyote Stories , and Grandfather Stories of the Navajo , More importantly however, SRM encourages the production of classroom materials by the students. By complementing English language skill acquisition with the opportunity to learn more about cultural heritage and native values, the student is, in essence, exposed to many subjects integrated as one.

RECYCLING SKILLS

When a concept is forgotten shortly after it is acquired, the concept has not been learned. Continuous repetition that recycles

skills is essential to effective learning. One instructional method employed by the SRM approach, the nonthreatening daily quiz, both encourages long term memory and provides students with a daily chance for success.

The quiz emphasizes material previously covered and is presented immediately at the beginning or at the end of a class period. The instructor first states the purpose of the quiz and the subject area to be covered within the quiz. Second, he asks if there are any questions about the subject matter to be quizzed. If questions are raised, the instructor asks for clarification or examples from others students first. If no one can answer the student's question, then the teacher reteaches the item briefly and again asks for feedback.

When there are no more questions, the teacher passes out the quiz papers. Students are given four instructions and are asked to follow them in order. First, they should complete all the questions to which they know the answer; second, they should use their notes for questions that they are unsure of or for which they need clarification; third, they should ask their peers for the remaining answers; fourth, they should ask the teacher. Students are told that they are not to turn in a paper for which they have not completed all answers correctly. This process aids the student who does not know a response and it also aids his peers, who learn by teaching. The only occasion when this is not encouraged is on cumulative exams.

The use of the daily quiz maximizes classroom learning time since valuable instructional time is generally lost in the first and the last five minutes (realistic examples are taking attendance and getting ready for the bell to ring). The techniques also reinforce notetaking and develop a positive working atmosphere when students are

required to begin the quiz immediately after the bell rings. Further, the daily quiz provides the teacher with immediate feedback concerning the effectiveness of instructional methods and provides the student with feedback concerning progress, both critical concerns of the Shared Responsibility Model.

CONCLUSION

As the world continues to shrink, the need for the non-native English speaker to communicate with the global environment increases. Possibly the most efficient way to energize the curriculum is by bringing relevance into the classroom and by allowing students and teachers to actively participate in education.

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